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SUBJECT: NEW UN REP ARRIVES AS DRAWDOWN ASSESSMENT STARTS

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¶1. SUMMARY: Ms. Ameerah Haq, the new Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Timor-Leste (SRSG), took up her post on January 6, 2010. One of her first tasks is to assist the UN Technical Assessment Mission that is in Dili from January 11-18 to make recommendations on drawing down the UN's presence in Timor-Leste by 2012. In an introductory call on the Ambassador, Haq expressed concern about the readiness of the Timorese police to resume full law enforcement responsibilities from UN police. That said, she acknowledged the general consensus locally that full police command responsibilities should be returned to the Timorese by end-2010. Recognizing that a significant downsizing of the UN presence would be the major objective of her tenure in Timor-Leste, Haq emphasized the importance of her role as providing good offices to all key players and stakeholders. END SUMMARY.

¶2. Ms. Ameerah Haq, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) and the head of the UN Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), formally began her duties on January 6, replacing Atul Khare as the ranking UN official in Timor-Leste. Haq's tenure began three days before the arrival of a 34-person Technical Assessment Mission (TAM) from UN headquarters in New York, led by a previous SRSG, Ian Martin. The TAM is tasked with carrying out a full assessment of UNMIT's size and composition. Its input is designed to inform the Secretary-General's report to the UN Security Council when it considers a renewal of UNMIT's mandate, which expires on February 26, 2010.

Key Concern is Security Sector

¶3. Haq paid an introductory courtesy call on Ambassador Klemm on January 12. She reported receiving a warm welcome thus far, having already met with all of the country's senior political leaders.

¶4. Haq indicated that her key concern is the security sector.

The December 28 killing of a Timorese youth by a national police (PNTL) officer typified the murky command and control procedures that raise worries about police abuse. Haq noted that the generally improved security conditions witnessed in recent years enable the consideration of a continued drawdown of UN peacekeepers and International Stabilization Force (ISF) troop levels, but underscored that the foundation still had to be laid for systematic stability going forward. Haq shared that, among her conversations thus far, FRETILIN opposition leader Mari Alkatiri was the most worried about the UN's departure timetable being too precipitous.

15. Ambassador Klemm described President Ramos-Horta's proposal for a full handover of police command responsibilities from the UN to the PNTL by the end of 2010, including a PNTL resumption of policing authority in Dili by June 2010. Ramos-Horta's logic, which the Ambassador assessed as sound, is for the PNTL to develop experience and confidence in its own command abilities well in advance of the next major security challenge on the horizon – the Presidential and Parliamentary elections expected in 2012. The Ambassador emphasized that a well-thought out monitoring program for UN peacekeepers (UNPOL) remaining in Timor-Leste should accompany that handover schedule. He also encouraged an independent needs assessment of the PNTL as an institution, so that the bilateral partners that will necessarily be taking the lead on security sector assistance once the UN departs will know what the PNTL's key training and capacity needs are. Haq agreed that the PNTL's priority shortcomings at present are in investigatory capacity, discipline and professional ethics, and logistics.

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Medium and Long Term Factors

16. The Ambassador expressed his general optimism about Timor-Leste's prospects into the medium term, but identified three primary risk factors. The first is continued shrill political rhetoric, which in the past has been destructive. The second risk factor is the capacity of the security institutions; some reforms are complete but many shortcomings remain. Finally, there is a potential confrontation between rising expectations about the country's development potential and its continued severe poverty and high unemployment. Food riots in 2007 were one example of this tension between expectations and disappointing reality.

17. For the long term, the Ambassador expressed more concern. It remains unclear what Timor-Leste's sources of long-term economic growth will be. The country's infrastructure needs are great but progress on improvements is slow. The government has not formulated a strategy for how the country will integrate into the regional and global economy. Weak human capital is a real constraint on the country's development, one which is exacerbated by an unhelpful language situation (four main languages coexist uneasily in a country of just over one million people) that hinders the educational system. The Ambassador quoted President Ramos-Horta's complaint that Timor-Leste had little to show for the \$3 billion in foreign assistance it has received since 1999, and wondered if, absent progress on long-term factors, leaders would be asking the same question in ten years time.

¶8. Haq said the UN TAM is likely to recommend a gradual phase down of the UN presence over the next three years. A smaller, political office would remain in country after the peacekeeping mission ends, to coordinate the work of the UN development agencies with an ongoing presence. The TAM team is scheduled to be in Dili until January 18 and time constraints may make it difficult for it to submit its report in time for the UN Security Council to renew UNMIT's annual mandate before it expires at the end of February. Haq thought the Security Council might consider a technical rollover of the mission's mandate for one month, so it could consider a full report of the TAM visit in March. (Ian Martin shared with the Ambassador on January 13 that the inclination now at UN headquarters was to accelerate the drafting of the TAM and Secretary-General's reports to enable a Security Council mandate review by end February as currently scheduled.)

Official Bio Data

¶9. Ms. Ameerah Haq most recently served as Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan as well as the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan (2007-2009), and, before that, as Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, as well as the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan (2004-2007). Her broad management experience in supporting complex mission deployment activities will greatly contribute to her new role at UNMIT.

¶10. She was formerly the Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery at United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Headquarters in New York. She served as the United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Malaysia from 1994 to 1997

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and in the same capacity in Laos from 1991 to 1994.

¶11. Ms. Haq worked in the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific at UNDP Headquarters in various capacities from 1980-1990, which included responsibilities for aid coordination mechanisms and as Desk Officer for Thailand, Myanmar and Bhutan. She also had an assignment with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) from 1985 to 1987. She started her career in 1976 as a Junior Professional Officer in Jakarta, Indonesia and was transferred to Afghanistan as Assistant Resident Representative in 1978.

¶12. Ms. Haq holds master's degrees in community organization and planning and in business administration from Columbia University and New York University, respectively. She completed a Bachelor of Arts at Western College in Oxford, Ohio.

KLEMM